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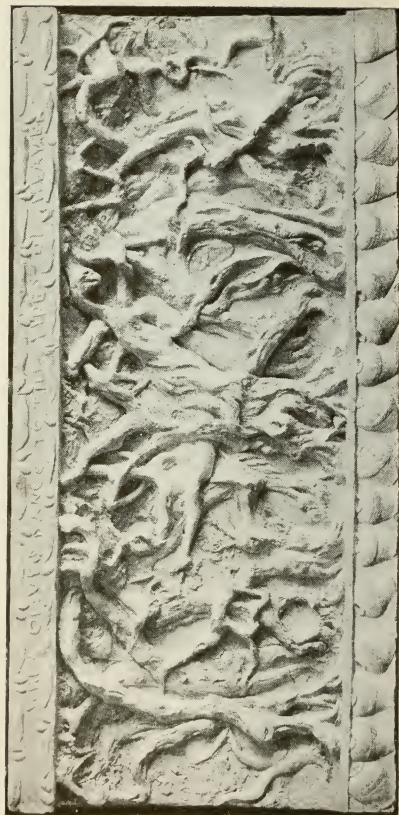
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THE DANCE OF OLIVES



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[From a Photograph of the original Frieze
“THE DANCE OF OLIVES”]

THE
DANCE OF OLIVES

BY
ARTHUR MAQUARIE

ILLUSTRATED WITH REPRODUCTIONS FROM A
BRONZE RELIEF AND NINE SEPIA
DRAWINGS BY HIS WIFE

MARY LINTNER MAQUARIE



LONDON
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1905

128

M322A

THIS LITTLE BOOK
WE DEDICATE
TO ONE ANOTHER

30.7.1944. E. H. T. G. H. H.

OH for the harps of Selma !
Oh for the rising wail of that full tone
Among the untrimmed oaks,
Among the breezes strong with rock-dashed surf
And echoes of rained steel !

The strain I know,
Know its deep-taken breath, its shuddering calm,
Its slow resistless surge
Bearing all onward to the note where speaks,
Clear, free, the soul at last !
That strain I know—
It hath not died with you, ye white-haired bards,
Or in thy white bosom, blue-eyed Oina-Morul.

But that my harp is thick,
And from the dull air of these latter times
Muffles its vibrant soul ;
And from my voice a dry world-weariness
Has robbed the pang ;

And in my harp, my voice, my soul, my life,
A languor stifles all.

Alone it cannot drowse
The centrest of me with its numbing touch ;
It cannot reach to where the pallid brows
Of love and song
Dream deeply in their golden wordless pain.

THE DANCE OF OLIVES





LE DOYEN

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

Le Doyen

THE night is clear, the stars on high
Are trembling in a purple sky,
The harvest winds are idling round
Too drowsed with sweets to move a sound.
Come brothers, not since first I spied
From out the dreamless earth and saw
A world in being, old and wide,
And worn by ever-chafing law,
Has such a moment seemed to take
The will within my sap and make
A measure in my limbs, as play
The ripples on the standing hay.
Come, think, three hundred summers gone
And winter to be here anon,
And what must come must surely go—
We know it all, we know, we know.
We know the soil about our roots

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

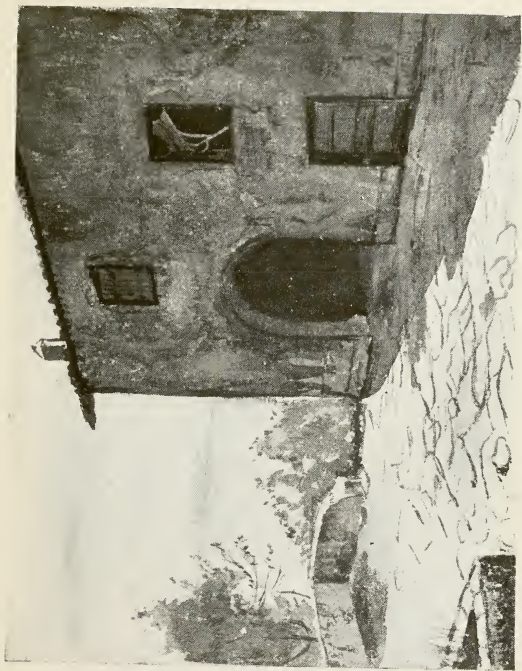
Is rich each year with trampled fruits
To turn to trampled fruits again,
Since life and labour both are vain
And every law doth make them so.
For who will hope to have me think
My joy is in the meat and drink
Of those that view me as the stone
I feed upon and call my own?
And who will stand and fill my ears
With talk of honoured after-years
When all my sap is gone to air,
My whitened cinders scattered where
The rank and rusty dock-weed rears?

Al

Come let us dance a dance to time
That rears and scars and fells us all,
And gives to each the part of mime
Where every age and every clime
Files on in ranked processional.
Oh let us make our pageant gay;
The car is ample when our needs
Are but to feel ourselves at play
Regardless whether any heeds,



OUR HARVEST VALLEY-GROVES



A WORLD IN BEING

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

Regardless what the rest may say.
The rôle is ours, do what we may,
The cast was drawn before we knew ;
A few are honoured, and a few
Are quickly turned again to clay,
A few are rent and hurled away—
The one that on the summit grew
And robed the sun of yesterday,
To-night is shining spectral gray
With pesty rodents through and through.
Come dance, for surely nought is ill
While yet we have the boisterous will
To laugh at all that life can bring,
And laugh at death, and dying sing.

Ho every wind that idling lies
Among our harvest valley-groves,
Awake and bring your melodies
With lilt and triplet as behoves
The dance of those who reel and sway
To every motive, sad and gay,
And keep the light within their eyes.
Come, bring your notes from peak and grot
And from the ruined mountain shrine
Where Mary Virgin's fingers rot

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

And leave her seeming less divine
Than deities of ancient days.
Come bring from winding moonlit ways
The lisp of leaves more lush than ours,
The patter of the dusky bays,
The sigh that round the cypress towers
For ever and for ever plays.
And in each hard and tender tone
Fill ye that magic of your own.

Bring your music, ye winds of heaven.
Ho! ho! Rise and blow
A merry dance till our cold sap glow,
And our vale slopes billow with row on row
Of dancers dancing, dancing.

We laugh, we laugh, for 'tis so the chaff
Whirls smitten hard by the winnowing fan,
And wedding favour or funeral scarf,
Except for a whim in the mind of man,
Flutters alike in the self-same sky
Where all are dying of fear to die.
We laugh, we laugh at the passing years,
We laugh at fears and the fears of fears,
And find delight in the thought of change



THE CYPRESS TOWERS

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

Which may be bright or it may be strange,
As one grows ripe and another sears.

Pipe your music ye winds of heaven ;
Here we sway, here we pace
Measures wild as the dreams of man,
That fly through realms in a giddy race
And beat free wings in the void a space
Nor ever budge from their ground a span—
Panting there where the race began.
We laugh at dreams and the dream-lit face
And eyes that smile in the light of dreams
Behind dark lids where a moment's grace
Makes seeming real of the thing that seems
And gives a name to a time and place.
We laughed as we saw the pope laid low,
We laughed as we saw the Austrian go ;
For powers will rise and powers will fall,
And cannons bellow their echoes hoarse
But a laughing power pulls strings for all,
Gives Gaul its breeches and Greece its pall
And sets the stride in a zigzag course.

Blow your music ye winds of heaven
Swell an organ of every tone,

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

Cornet, viol, and the deep posaune,
Vox humana and voix celeste—
For all are fitting and none is best,
And quintal mixture and fife may screech
A madder mood than could find its speech
In booming bourdon or gemshorn's moan.
Blow ye now as ye ne'er have blown,
Through every throat on the hills around ;
We dance a dance to the great unknown
That mocks us all from a despot throne
And strews our flanks on the hungry ground.

Change the music ye winds of heaven :
Whisper light, whisper low,
We have seen lovers come and go,
Lovers who loved as but lovers know.

Oh how shall ye time a dance to love ?
Shall it be swift and sweet and strong,
Or a melodious dream all hushed
And in its instant seeming long ?
But hover as panting breath above,
While with our arms we join around,
Heeding our purples be not crushed,
For they are bitter at heart as love

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

And a wrench will bring them swift to the ground.
Love is joy, and joy is pain,
And love is pain with a purple bloom,
And life is a web of smiles and tears,
And hearts are flax and love is the loom.
And what is the world but sun and rain,
And hills and valleys to take them in?
And what is thought but a fevered brain?
And what is will but the power to sin?

Hush your music, ye winds of heaven,
We have seen lovers come and go,
Lovers who loved as but lovers know,
Who loved and sighed and are lying low
Or blown fine dust on the yards of heaven.

Chorus of Air-Spirits

We are the restless spirits of the air,
We come, we go, we loiter here and there,
We fill strong breasts, we throb with joy and care.

We know the mountains and the shimmering plain,
We sang with Israel chanting garnered grain,
We hung in gun-clouds on the Spanish Main.

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

We dance on deserts, fly amid flung foam,
We race with shadows o'er the upturned loam,
All time our morning and the world our home.

Olives

We know you : oft our branches dip and rise
To mark the rhythms of your melodies.

Night-Birds

Oh well we know you, circling in our skies.

Olives

Oh ye can tell us why we live, and why
The oak, the cypress, and the vesper fly,
With all that lives, must live in vain, and die.

Air-Spirits

We are the restless spirits of the air,
We choir afar where streaks of morning flare,
We silent wave among night's mantling hair.

We know all time and all eternity,
All great things past, we keep in symphony,
We hymn the prelude of all things to be.



WORN BY EVER-CHAFING LAW

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

We heard at birth the course of change decreed.

Olives

Oh ye can tell us what we fain would rede !
Oh kindly spirits, help us in our need.

Air-Spirits

The night is calm, the winds around
Hold breath to hear our pleasant sound,
A hush of expectation thrills
To noon-gilt Asia's central hills.

The range of time, ere time began
To bear the faint impress of man,
Has counted every step and bar
With one great purpose looming far.

What launch of planets into space
Where mazed ellipses interlace !
What stride of suns to farthest nights !
What lurch of erring satellites !

What age of dark ! What age of dawn !
What age of light ere life was born !
The Sphinx smiles over wastes of sand
Man strives in vain to understand.

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

How small he is ! How less than small
His pomp, his pride, his power and all !
Even so the sun, the earth, the moon,
Are fine as dust and vanish soon.

Throughout its awful vasty range
The universe doth groan with change,
Till every jar shall find its close
In hymnal raptures of repose.

For every smallest point we see
In all the starry galaxy,
Was once the fibre of a god
More glorious than the heaven he trod.

His name was Sin ; no god so great
Within the outposts of his State
But worshipped him as sovereign lord
In joyed attendance on his word.

There all was peace, time could not be
Amid such wondrous ecstasy,
For through the wisdom of his reign
None knew regret, or grief, or pain.

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

So myriad myriad aeons passed,
Till, wearied by his power at last,
From being lovingly revered
He sought to make his sceptre feared.

Ah, then came pain and every ill
In troupes that bound yet would not kill—
And in the realms of smiling morn,
With sweat and weeping, time was born.

It held them 'neath its molten heel
With every pang that gods could feel,
While Sin was hurling from his throne
New curses with each echoed groan.

But soon through all the seething horde
There came a hush of strong accord,
And as the thunder fills the night
So pealed the rage of rebel might.

One surge, and all was fully done !
The overweening mighty one
Thus flouted by his vassalage
Turned on himself his filthy rage.

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

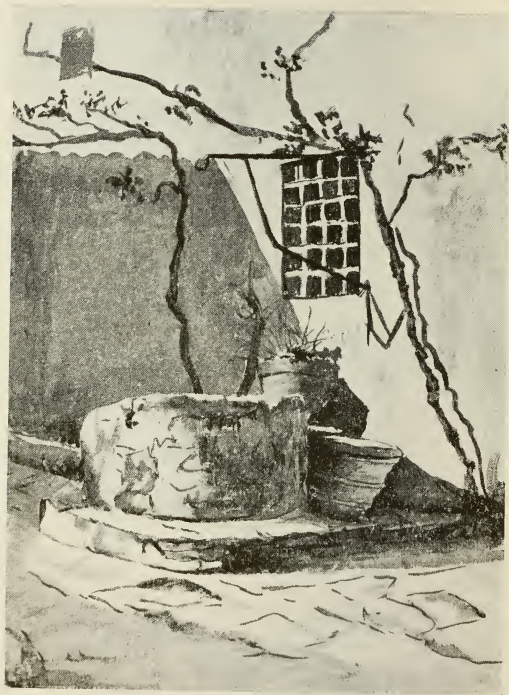
And dissolution powdered him
The self-same instant to a dim
Fine smoke of atoms each at feud
Through all that bulky amplitude.

Then rose the dignities and flung
It into chaos, where among
The solitude of silent gloom
Such mass might find a fitting tomb.

But since his godhead could not die,
In part a new-found harmony
Is fashioning his glorious form
From those driven blastings of the storm.

And so with groaning change on change
Throughout the universal range
This evolution strives amain
Till Sin be god enthroned again.

When joy shall fill those courts above,
And all be swayed by humble love,
And every jar shall find its close
In hymnal raptures of repose.



WHAT WAS AIR WILL SOON BE SHOWER

THE DANCE OF OLIVES

Olives

Then dance we all as we have danced,
For surely in our time we fall,
And what was air will soon be shower,
Since all are creatures of an hour,
And change annihilates us all
In something far beyond our power.
Oh little hap how all we chanced !
We know the sun, we know the dew,
We know the blasts of winter too,
And what we love not we may bear .
A moment till we turn to air
Or leave some yard of soil enhanced.
The night is clear, the stars on high
Are trembling in a purple sky,
And we may dance before we die.

OTHER VERSES

BALLADE OF THE HAG

MINE is the flesh, the blood, the bone,
Press in your kisses as ye may,
Fondle and fawn and make love's moan,
Banish grim future far away :—
Still do I stand and wait my day,
And the fairest rose is the soonest blown,
And the time is long to repent and pray
Recluse and silent beneath my stone.

One of world-mention have I known,
Great by breathing, in honours grey,
Whose blood was black with his ill-deeds
sown

In the laps of women who sin for pay.
Southward yachting he cut the spray,
And in idle mood, since the thing was priced,
Touched tourist lips on a painted clay,
With filthy plague for the feet of Christ.

BALLADE OF THE HAG

Then walking slow with an inward groan
To her babe unborn that the light should slay,
Came a peasant woman, late left alone
By her conscript's death in a vain affray ;
And thinking His will to best obey,
She threw herself on the paving prone
And kissed her Christ with a fond delay
And took in death at her Hope's high throne.

L'Envoi

But write thy rhymes on a churchyard stone,
And let them labour or laugh who may,
For, rose or briar, they soon are blown,
And both rot well in a clammy clay.

THE REBEL

How did I sin that my life was cursed
Ere yet I had oped blank eyes to morn ?
That my cheeks were lined and my mouth puff-
pursed
And my brows, were it ever so little, drawn ?
Why was I given a badge of scorn
To wear till that day when my woe is hearsed,
And the wreaths of a priced neglect adorn
Where soon the unhande'd weeds shall burst ?

Give me no answer ! Not as erst
Now do I greet a tale outworn,
Graced with poetic fall, and tersed
Into wise sounding saw. Youth's horn
Winding from fields of Love, and borne
Soft on Life's meadow-sweet, is versed
Deeper in lores of joy ;—and, lorn,
Best is for me to face the worst.

THE REBEL

Never—the word springs eager first—
 Never on me will the lover fawn ;
Never my yearning limbs be nursed ;
 Never pale in, the woman's dawn—
 Though I would brave God's wrath, and pawn
My soul's salvation to slake its thirst,—
 Never ! As blades grow on to corn
Come the full-eared curses to those accursed.

L'Envoi

Lend me your arm, my pulses burst ;
 The world swims round as a drunkard's morn ;
And life is black with shot pains ; and thirst
 Wears at my soul and is not outworn.

I WITH the wide young Empire in my veins,
With parents breathing the strong Austral sun,
With kin inured to hardship on the plains
Where after all defeats the prize is won—
I, though a wanderer with a loitering lyre,
Feel for the moment one hot touch of fire.

If my own blood be needed, I will go
And add it to my kinsman's blood that fell
Where in the thickest of a treacherous foe
He plied swift steel and scorned the rage of hell.
If I am wanted, here at once am I,
Yielding myself as one content to die.

But if you, England, should relax your hold
In this ill wrestle ; if through failing skill,
Or faint resolve, or putrid lust of gold,
You leave what once you swore was God's clear
will ;
Then I shall cast you off and curse your name
And sing a free Australia—free from shame.

GOING WEST

My boys, I'm going West,
Beyond the mountain line,
Beyond the new-chum mine,
Beyond the jerber's nest ;
To-night I take my rest
Beyond Amadeus' brine.

No spinifex is there,
Nor barren blistering sand,
No languor in the hand,
No flame-sting in the air,
No thirst, nor ache, nor care,
Nor dreams of other land.

I go where ground is none,
Where all has ceased to be,
Where you shall follow me
Ere many days are done ;
I pass behind the sun
And take Oblivion's sea.

GOING WEST

So sip some barleycorn
While still this "I" is "I,"
'Tis no more sad to die
Than not to have been born ;
'Tis very sad to mourn
Our little life awry.

CLEF-SIGN ETERNAL

OH holy Love be thou my light
To guide me on my road,
Be thou my strength in every fight,
My help to bear life's load.

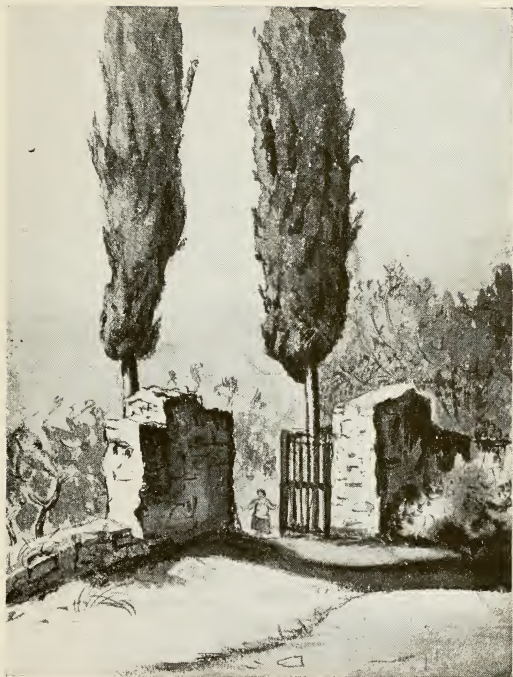
Be with me when dread doubts arise
And thoughts of empty years,
Steal warmly to my tingling eyes
And staunch my rising tears.

What woes press on the heels of woes !
What drear dawns mock the night !
But thou canst smile on all my foes
And drench my soul with light.

Thy power is gentler than a thought,
Though mightier than the sea ;
Oh guide me to a peaceful port,
Or let me drown in thee.



HERE MARY VIRGIN STANDS



CLEF-SIGN ETERNAL

HERE Mary Virgin stands,
Showing wide Arno's noon-siesta'd vale
Two moss-grown hands.
Her crown long years
Has crumbled to the pathway where the mule
Jingles his bells above her painted tears
And time-flaked wounds. Alone the night-winds
wail
In boisterous March about her mountain shrine,
And the June sun can make her seem divine.

THY languid head when passion is done
Is the head that best I love,
When thy brow is calm as a weary sun,
And thy limbs, like winds whose course is run,
Sink softly and make no move,
And thy spirit takes a sigh-like tone and I know
that it basks in love.

O thou my darling, my soul's delight,
There is no spot in thee,
Thou art more holy than wafted night
Across still water where moon-flecks bright
Make Syrian melody.
And when I think how goodly thou art, oh love I
have tears for thee.

ALLERSEELEN

THE yellow poplar leaves have strown
Thy quiet mound ; thou slumberest
Where winter's winds will be unknown,—
So deep thy rest.

Sleep on, my love ; thy dreams are sweet,
If thou hast dreams ; the flowers I brought
I lay aside for passing feet ;—
Thou needest nought.

The grapes are gathered from the hills,
The wood is piled, the song-bird gone ;
The breath of early evening chills ;
My love, sleep on.

“ Oh, for the love of Christ,” I said,
“ Say not the thing you say ! ” . . .
“ For love of *me*,”—she raised her head,
“ Leave me and go your way.”
What way in the dead world’s pit? And my
spirit died of dismay.

And my voice like the stir of leaves on sand
Could find no tone for reply ;
Then she took my hand in her chill calm hand
And she said : “ Good-bye—Good-bye.”
Oh cold as marble was she, and colder than deep
graves I.

We stayed ; and her big eyes filled with tears,
And her soul smiled out like a sun :
“ I know ! ” she said, “ I have loved long years
The heart of some other one.”
My soul was a flame of fire, and I knew my
life but begun.

ON A DROWNED THRUSH

POOR soul of song, I think thou art not dead,
But somewhere livest where thy throbbing throat
Hath freer motion, and thine only bars
Are thine own echoes from the far pure stars,
And all the vasty heaven takes up thy note
While I sigh on, earth-bound, uncomforted.

ZIRYĀB

Ay, sink you down, and let brief twilight bless
The level fields with balmy amorousness,
And let the true believer say his prayers
And hasten to his mistress's caress.

Then I must go and seek once more my lute
That all these hours has lain despised and mute,
For Abd-er-Ahman requires his nightly song
And I must gain my gold and keep repute.

An hour and I shall find myself in hall
The sultan's master, through his humble thrall,
Singing of some new beauty, and her eyes
Most great and dark, or mouth most soft and small.

Alas that I have lived so long in vain,
Entwining ringlets with a soft refrain,
And hynning fountains where the houris laugh,
Nor once have caught a note of inner pain.

ZIRYĀB

Let Yahya reason of three gods or one,
And paint the life that lies beyond the sun,
I would forsake true Allah but to yearn
As christians and idolators have done.

I ply my skilful art without a peer,
Although the Moselite himself were here,
Yet all the songs of Islam I would give
For one rough line that broke to free a tear.

This life of ours in Cordoba, this ease
In hand of Fate, this calm bliss fails to please ;
I rather were a lizard in the sun
Or else a man with man's grand miseries.

Not even love—such love as Islam keeps—
Could hold me longer faithful, for he reaps
But warm delight who loves with us, and I
Have seen a Frankish slave who loves and weeps.

Oh, I would be a heathen and resign
All joys of promised Paradise, to pine
With those deep sighs and longings that I heard
Last even while I sat behind the vine.

ZIRYĀB

But I must go, the muezzin calls to prayer,
And Yahya and the sultan will be there,
And while they pray my fancy may design
The latest grace to rhyme with eyes or hair.

LOVE

LIKE the rosy northern glow
Flushing on a moonless night
Where the world is level snow,
So thy light.

In my time of outer gloom
Thou didst come, a tender lure ;
Thou, when life was but a tomb,
Beamedst pure.

Thus I looked to heaven again,
Yearning up with eager eyes,
As sunflowers after dreary rain
Drink the skies.

Oh glow on, and brighter glow,
Let me ever gaze on thee,
Lest I lose warm hope and so
Cease to be.

YOU AND I

My love, on the stairs of life we stand,
 You and I,
Shall we not take each other by the hand,
And treading side by side, arm looped in arm,
Heart merged in heart, thoughts drowned in the
 same calm,
Rise and survey the world as a far land?

We could perchance be happy thus,
 You and I,
You with that infinite brightness tremulous
Of Junetide sun, and I with one desire:
To feel the glowing of your spirit's fire—
Ah, but eve's rack would be gold noon to us!

Nay, we should mount and mount till death,
 You and I,
Soar on new wings until the clouds beneath
Sank with the old world, and each thought grew
 round
To the near rhythms of celestial sound,
And the stars trembled at our flame-filled breath.



THE STAIRS OF LIFE

SUMMER

THE poppy sways in a noonday dream ;

 Come out, my love !

The tree-bird sleeps in a river gleam ;

 Come out, come out !

Come out, I would wander with you and dream.

Oh my love, you are far above all most fair ;

 My love, above all !

The light of God's glance is upon your hair,

 My love, my love !

And the smile of His favour makes you fair.

Oh take but my hand in your holy hand ;

 We two will dream !

Will wander where life is a far-off land ;

 We two, we two !

Will dream together, linked hand in hand.

SONG

RISE my love, bring in the dawn,
Ope thine eyes upon the night,
Smile the darkness into fawn,
Beam to rosy light.

Peer and glow until the day
Widens on a happy world,
And the thickly blossomed spray
Shimmers dewy-pearled.

Rise and peer and beam and smile !
Rise, for here thy lover waits !
Rise, for Joy spends weary while
Chafing at the gates !

Stirring on his chilly bough
Now the thrush's sleep is done ;
Beaded leaves are moving now
Restive for the sun.

SONG

Comes a fresh of things to be
When thy tender lids are furled ;
Comes a silent call for thee
From the waiting world.

Rise and peer and beam and smile !
Rise, for here thy lover waits !
Rise, for Joy spends weary while
Chafing at the gates !

Now the dark slow sighs of night
Die into the tingling morn ;
Little hushings of delight
Hover incense-borne.

Throw thy leaded casement wide,
Let the rose-breaths soften in ;
All the world and I abide ;
Day yearns to begin.

Rise and peer and beam and smile !
Rise, for here thy lover waits !
Rise, for Joy spends weary while
Chafing at the gates !

It was thy choice, and thou hast chosen well—

Thou art the secret at the heart of Spring,

Thou art that joy the morning years to tell,

Thou art a gleam, a waft of blossoming ;

While I by some soul-weariness am made

Companion of the shade.

I never dreamed that thou wouldst choose to stay—

My life has known such dreams, but they are
gone—

Not even would I hold thee on thy way ;

I did but look ; thou smiling passedst on.

I could have bent and kissed thy tiny feet,

So much I loved thee, sweet.

LATTER LOVE

OUR lips have never met, our hands have pressed
At most less firmly than two strangers' might,
My arm has never drawn you to my breast
Among the shadows of the panting night.
I know too well the feel of human clay,
And I would love you in my own queer way.

You stand enhaloed as no woman else
In that far glamour of youth's fantasies,
With thoughts all holier than the pure-voiced bells
That spread the meadows with a Sabbath ease.
But go and know desire and live your day,
While I will love you in my own queer way.

CLORA, I wait thy dawning
From the dark gardens of the hidden world,
From the cool tracts where all things are not yet—
Clora, I wait thy dawning.

Why dost thou linger so ?
Is it to pluck dim poppies for thy bosom
That I may drowse in them ? Thou dost not well ;
Clora, I wait thy dawning.

Clora, my life, unseen,
The feel of thy far presence dwells as woe
Within these longing limbs and yearning eyes ;
Clora, I wait thy dawning.

Oh come and keep me not !
Come with soft languors as of summer morn
Upon thy lips, and in thy morn-soft arms ;
Clora, I wait thy dawning.

My breath glows on thy cheek—thou knowest the
sign,
Canst see the passion burning in my eyes,
Canst feel me straining ever closer, closer ;
Thou knowest, Death, that I would couch with
thee.

Yield thee ! Yield ! Put up thy languorous lips
For my one flaming kiss that shall not move
Till all is o'er, and sleep among thy folds
Subdue me to a nerveless helpless thing.

Then thou canst glide from my embrace and go
With softest foot from where I have no dreams,
And thou canst glance aback, if pleases thee,
To that still form that once was pulsed with woe.

And, if thou please, then mayest thou pause and
smile

At mortal flesh—for lo ! I made it not—
And thou canst find new loves without my wrath
If thou wilt only take me now to thee.

Thy arms, oh Death ! thy breasts, oh Death ! the
heave

About thee, fuse my last cold thoughts of earth.

Thou hast all joy upon thy ample bosom !

Put up thy lips ! Come ! I would couch with
thee !

NIRVANA

BROAD silence of the open sea
At mid moon when the winds are dead,
Deep crimson swoon that swaylessly
Enfolds the drooping poppy's head,
Wait still, wait calm afar for me !
I come when toilful life is fled.

Wait calm, for when I fall to sleep
I would not feel the settling heave,
Or any stir of dreams that creep
From this mad turmoil that I leave ;
Wait still, oblivion pure and deep,
Where being not I cannot grieve.

THE ART AND LIFE SONNETS

“ Ridere piangere, e burlarsi di tutto.”

OF POVERTY

WHEN I reflect how little faith remains
 In this sad world, and how the days beget
 Uncounted new necessities to fret
 My lofty soul ; and when I view my gains
 So vilely nothing after infinite pains—
 As one who doffs a disproved amulet
 I lay my last hope by of genial debt
 And silent gaze on life's drear hard-cash plains.

Then in a trice the thought of bread and cheese
 Comes mantling o'er me like a thunder gloom
 That ere the wind can change will crash down
 doom,
 And in a vision I behold my knees
 Spread with cold herrings in an attic room—
 "Ah God!" I dumbly cry, "Not these, not
 these!"

OF ADVERSITY

HAPLY the passes of adversity
 May lead unwilling to some nobler good,
 Haply as Dante through his tangled wood
 We issue to such things as cannot be
 For those who loll in idle luxury ;
 And as the digger thanks the stormy flood
 That lays bare golden treasure, so we should
 Bless all our stars, and sorrow joyfully.

Haply we should—but oh 'twere passing strange
 To couple Dante in a phrase with fish.
 Why can we not select the woes we wish,
 Be exiles, spurned, unloved, and for a change
 Forego our dinner though we see the dish
 Come streaming odours from the kitchen range?

OF WORRIES

If all the sorrows in the world were joined
 (Which isn't likely) into one great fire,
 Or interwoven as a web from Tyre,
 Or like the arches of a fane engroined,
 Then could I smile and see my verse purloined,
 Or rest serene among the hurl of mire
 To sweep in solemn grandeur on my lyre
 Such strains as know not of a value coined.

But coming in continual dribs and drabs
 They weary me till I forget my muse,
 Ay, till the very soul of me refuse
 To rise triumphant above broken tabs.
 How can I fling my thunderbolts at Zeus
 While on the stairs a raucous house-dame gabs!

OF SECURITY

“UP drawbridge ! ” cried the haughty castellan—
And up she came and bit her staples tight,
And all the bolts shot home to left and right,
And calmly shone the sun. Then, then there ran
A peal derisive round, as every man
Swelled proudly conscious of his stubborn might
And on the walls the fires sprang fast alight
To brew warm welcome for the foeman’s van.

Ah me what comfort if from all my woes
I had a fortress Time could not despoil !
Then would my soul be firm and wait its foes,
And whoop sarcastic at their quick recoil
Beneath an April of good Gilead oil,
And every conflict have its glorious close.

OF TAKING THINGS EASY

TELL me what boots to battle, when the end
 Is foreseen failure ? What, by heaven, I ask—
 By bearded martyrs, and the holy cask
 Of papal comfort, what can struggle lend
 Of true nobility to those who bend
 Constrained after all ? 'Twere better bask
 With resignation and a quiet flask
 Than rush to strokes that heaven will surely send.

Methinks the base desire to pose for pars
 Is born within the blood like lechery,
 And as the wavelet curls in every sea
 The schoolboy bares his wounds and thinks him
 Mars.

Give me Petrarca and a pot of tea,
 And carry thou thy honourable scars.

OF DEATH

WHEN I am dead and coldly laid in earth,
No longer heedful of the morning sun,
No longer piping while the spring days run,
Or loitering where the hill streams have their birth,
Let not the world forego its tawdry mirth,
Or any pause in revelries begun,
For while I live I love not anyone ;
I give them sonnets from my great heart's dearth.

Alone my laundress may bemoan the void
Of two francs weekly in her scanty purse,
I pay her reg'lar and forbear to curse
For all the odds and ends she has destroyed ;
Full little recks she of my sounding verse
But calls me "*maestro*" and so rests employed.

OF RHYMING

Nor for the heedless multitude of those
Who pass the slender poem by to read
The rantings of some hall-marked sham, whose
screed

Is ordered by the column, nor to close
The lids of sluggard dames who choose to doze
Above a gilded booklet, nor to feed
The fancies of young girls, do poets bleed
The inmost fountains of their spirits' woes.

But for the bitter comfort to be won
By weaving sighs to varying harmonies
Outrising all the high desires that run
To cadence ever, and by lost degrees
Forgetting even sorrow, as a nun
Forgets to pray in prayer's last ecstasies.

OF WEARINESS

WHEN I am weary and the day is done,
And Melancholy, my incessant mate,
Leans heavier on me, whispering "It is late ;
Our couch is ready ! " all my sorrows run
To simple heart-ache and I long for one
Whose beaming smile would lift the load of
Fate,
And make my sparseness seem as regal state
And all my life ablaze with joy and sun.

Then, then I see a face before me rise
With effluence of gladness, and I know
That under heaven there are no such eyes
But yours alone ; and when I see them glow
To very life, ere yet their wonder dies
I close my streamy lids and keep you so.

OF THE DESIRE FOR LOVE

IF you could love me as I would be loved,
If you could give me heart and soul and all
And take me as I am to be the thrall
Of your dear beauty, that sweet smile that moved
Somewhere within your far-clear eyes and proved
Your sisterhood with things celestial,
Would hold me ever as your hand most small
Held mine but yesternow with mine ingrooved.

Then we would wander to some land afar
Where life lies golden by a shining sea,
Where no regrets, nor frets, nor sighings are,
But long delight alone can ever be ;
There might we find our Eden free from care,
There love till death—then clasp eternally.

OF LONGING

TELL me why art thou always clamouring,
Poor sad unthankful restless soul of me ;
Is it because too strong a memory
Of left infinitude controls thy string ?
For even at the day's bright bourgeoning
Thou strainest as with ache for melody
Once lived in and now lost, so that to thee
Remains alone the yearning and the sting.

Oh I have chid thee full a thousand times
That thou art foolish and unlearned in joy,
And I have bid thee jest and make a toy
Of wayward wanton smiles, and dance with mimes,
And wreathe thy hair, but ever to thy rhymes
Thou fleëst lest the talk of pleasure cloy.

OF LOSS

You were my music in the days that were,
 And every hour your spirit dwelt in me
 With pulsings of a full Infinity
 Too subtle for the dull unfeeling air ;
 And when my lips were wont to seek your hair
 In those great nights—Oh love, the memory !—
 What rapture panted, what panged ecstasy,
 What strong oblivion in your tender care.

Life then was but a surging of sweet tone
 That held the mind within its rhythmic sway,
 Like dreams undreamed of poppies yet ungrown
 When beauty heaves beneath the kiss of day.
 Oh life that I should now be left alone !
 Oh death, that I might straight dissolve away !

OF LIFE'S NARROWNESS

I, HAVING gone a hundred thousand miles,
And pausing distant half our orbal girth
From that drear land that cursed my soul with
 birth,
Stood loitering one soft morn of April smiles
On lazy Arno's bank, and watched the whiles
 A cheerful mason touched his stone to worth
 Until it little seemed but hard-hewn earth,
So light the magic of his fondling files.

Then as he turned to me I saw a name
 Already chiselled with the words "WHO
 DIED"—
And in a moment I was by his side—
"OF SYDNEY," then it surely was the same,
 My boyhood's friend! Perchance death opens
 wide;
Life is so narrow. Hot the hot tears came!

OF LIFE'S EMPTINESS

How little, oh how little will remain
Of all we sweat for ! What a fraud is life !
A nervous day with heat and languor rife,
And evening gloom, and nightfall thick with rain.
What guerdon have we for our hours of pain ?
Think not to tell me of the joys of strife,
Of calm content—I am no house-fag wife,
Or clown recruit—I say I must *attain*.

And did the world fall weeping at my rhymes,
Or shake with laughter till great rivers ran,
I might enjoy one meal, and then the man
Would rise within me ; for ten thousand times
My heart has groaned with aches Olympian :
I know my wants—plaud thou thy pantomimes.

OF THE HIDDEN SELF

HAD Julius Cæsar been a sonneteer
Our world had been the happier ; for we see
Too much his overtowering majesty,
His sea-like might that moves religious fear ;
We hold our breath, we cannot come anear,
So greatly was he dowered by destiny,
And envy prompts : “ Alack, alack that he
Knew not these sighs which make my rounding
year ! ”

But had he, when a summer midnight breath
Cleared all the stars above his Capitol,
And whispered gently that the world was
small,
And life a moment that we wait for death—
Oh had he then but tersed the truth for all :
There was a silent Cæsar underneath !

OF DISDAIN

“THOU damnèd pinch of earth!” the quaker
cried—

We read not why, nor does it matter much,
It gives the man at least a welcome touch
Of indignation not to be denied ;
And had I stood that moment by his side,
Then had I helped him on to other such,
In Spanish, French, Italian, German, Dutch,
Until my voice grew thick with very pride.

What joy, what joy transcendent may be found
By voiding all the frantic of the soul
In wide-mouthed curses that can echoing roll
Until poor human wretches tremble round !

Then know we that we have a grander goal,
And shall not mingle with them in the ground.

OF GLORY

Who will persuade me that one perfect song
Is not more glorious than a victor's bays?
I know not who. I ask because the phrase
Runs lightly and the final words are strong.
But did you press me for a right or wrong,
Then would I bid you hunt for perfect lays,
And rouse the dust of dead heroic days,
And pass your judgment if you live so long.

To me it seems more worth, when all is said,
To smoke a friend's cigar and see the moon
Lie rippling on the Arno mid the strewn
White ranks of rippling stars, to give my head
Its own good leading, to expect no boon,
To sing, and damn the world, and join the dead.

OF POPULAR SONGS

ONCE thought I, let me take a songster's wings
And circle o'er the maze of daily strife,
To tune such melodies as lighten life
And heal the heart that suffers fortune's slings,
Not pausing till our whole vast Empire sings —
Whether the sapper where death-hail is rife,
Or in the thatchy cot the country wife
Crooning soft love to infant slumberings.

Then opened I mine ears, and such a sound
Of nameless jargon trembled in the air,
There was no flight, no respite anywhere,
But puling pandemonium all around ;
So tossing back my rhythmic waves of hair
I left my inspirations sleeping bound.

OF LOVE'S ABANDON

WERE I in love, as I one day may be,
Not all the fancies of Italian brain
Would serve for me, but I would rush amain
To heavens beyond all known perimetry;
And I would pour such streams of melody
As lulled the lust of gods to holy pain
And softened Charon's cheek with gentle rain,
When Orpheus called for his Eurydice.

And I would touch for Her my old guitar
Da Vinci's fingers magicked (if the tale
Be not vile caitiff ruse to gild a sale —
Alas what liars antiquaries are!)
And through the tender moonlight would I wail
Till lost in glory died the morning star.

OF LIBERALITY

IF one should ask me what advice I give
To 'scape from woes and carping frets beside,
And see but joy, though pain stand thick beside,
And garner all the pleasures life can give,
Then should I bid: "Be wary how thou give;
Let thine be thine, and so much good beside
As thou canst take unbattered"—this beside
There is small counsel that a man may give.

But if thou press: "Should someone draw beside
With one great thought, to give and still to give,
And ask that thou receive and nought beside?"
Then I would smiling urge thee: "Give, oh give!
For in sweet love to give is not to give,
But find all wants and a full heaven beside."

OF SONNETEERING

To write a sonnet is like smoking twist :
 Though wondrous easy, not all flesh succeed.
 So if the raptured reader have a greed
For fummy fame, first should he chain his wrist
Until he feel his chilly forehead kist
 By the inspiring muse ; then let him heed
 This wisdom : To light well the fragrant weed
And take Petrarca, Love's evangelist.

Thus gliding on from hour to glowing hour,
 Will every thought of self and sonnets die
 Amid the sweetness of His harmony,
The solemn magic of His gentle power,
 The pure elation while His fancies ply
In Laura's crown a new celestial flower.

ENVOY

RAGLIO DI SOMARO

I, MYSELF, dark hidden at the core
Of strange-formed troublous clay, with its gross
needs,
I, clamorous, ill-voiced, lonely, aching I,
An exiled soul, a suffocating god,
I free my throat for one great hard-heaved cry.
I want, I will have Joy! No curses now
On Christs or worlds or wry infinities.
What care have I, what lightest care have I
For all that is or was or never was,
While in the throb and burning essence of me
Is one great straining, stifling after Joy?
I must have love. I will not live except
I soon find great, deep-eyed, wide-bosomed love.
I must have beauty, beauty in these days
Of rise and work and eat and work and rest,
And beauty in these nights of dreamless dark.

RAGLIO DI SOMARO

And I demand of—well I still demand,
Or cry for—cranky not with words—I *need*
Live poems in the soul to hum and lift
Through days and nights and glowing months and
 years ;
And I will have clear mind to peer them through,
And some small voice to sing them to my ears
And the free thrill and tingle of my soul.
Yes, I will have all this and more, for I
Require a keener vision to my eyes :
I must attain to see that Beauty's self
That lurks evasive in the bosky world,
For one short glimpse, one even hidden glimpse,
As love in tears, or roses drenched with rain.
I writhe enough beneath the firm cold claw
That grips my earthy throat ; I feel within
The lightness of a thing that knows to fly ;
And, being too long withheld, the yearning comes
To leave my clay and circle in the sun.
The warmth of spring noon calls me, and the sound
Of just-missed music where the poplar rears.
The sob of want clots up my throat again,
Come love, song, beauty, Life!—or meet me free

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